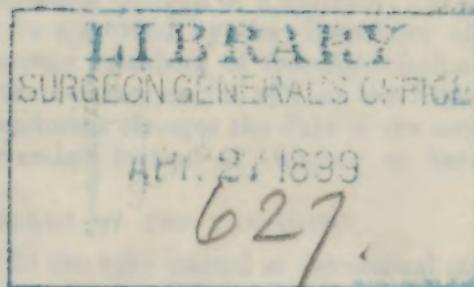


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BOSTON Medical Library. Special
Meeting to raise Funds for a
New Building, held on November xxix,
MDCCCXCVIII.



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Boston M. & S. J., 1899, CXI, 16-21

BOSTON MEDICAL LIBRARY.

SPECIAL MEETING TO RAISE FUNDS FOR A NEW BUILDING,

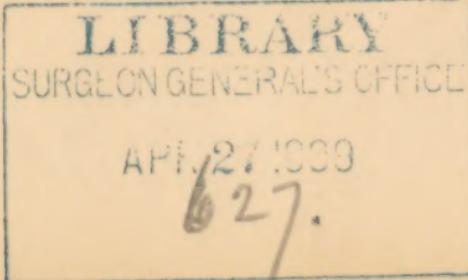
November 29, 1898.

DAVID W. CHEEVER, M.D., in the chair.

Two amendments to the By-laws were passed unanimously. The first provides that any member of the Massachusetts Medical Society, Massachusetts Dental Society, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy, and such others as may be approved by the Executive Committee, may become members of the Association by simply signing their names on the roll at the Library. The second amendment changes the date of the annual meeting to November instead of October as heretofore.

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT.

In obedience to the vote passed at the annual meeting, on the motion introduced by Dr. Chadwick, this special meeting has been called for the purpose of seeing if we can raise funds to leave this building and to get a better one. We are poor, but we are honest. Moreover, we are in this very unfortunate position: with constant accessions of books and periodicals, total inability to display them or to use them, great danger from fire, inaccessibility even to those stores of literature that we have already accumulated — a position



not worthy of the dignity of the regular profession in this community. In order to raise this money a strong appeal must be made to those outside the profession, and also to those inside the profession.

Within six to ten miles' radius of this building there are not less than 1,000 physicians of the Massachusetts Medical Society practising medicine. The Suffolk District Society, which does not follow strictly the lines of Suffolk County, has rising 500 members; and the very numerous communities around us in Middlesex and Essex and Norfolk easily bring up the total to 1,000 members; 1,000 physicians, perhaps one-half of the whole regular profession of the State of Massachusetts, are within easy riding distance of this library; and very many of them use it; and very many more would use it were it possible to provide suitable rooms where our numerous acquisitions could be on file and where they could be seen without waste of time.

Now this library, in certain respects, as I have no doubt others will tell you, is one of the best in the country. It is said to be one of the best to work in, because it consists largely of the medical knowledge of the day; kept up from day to day, and week to week, and not buried in obsolete volumes, but is rich in that invaluable periodical literature which reflects all the advances of medical science.

I very well remember when I was first beginning the profession that gentlemen had no such place to resort to. I remember myself, when trying to look up subjects, vibrating between the Boston Athenæum, which had some medical books, and the Public Library, which had other medical books, and the library in Temple Place, which belonged to the Improvement Society; so that the scanty sources of knowledge that existed then were scattered in three places, and great

waste of time and patience was the result. Now we have concentrated a vast amount of periodical medical literature, and we have at least 1,000 doctors ready and willing to use it. It is impossible to conceive that we can go on in this way without being able to raise a sufficient sum to put this library in its proper standing before the community, and to have a building which shall be worthy of the dignity of our profession, and one which, I believe, when once started, will be readily supported by ourselves. I can say no more, but will call on one who has been almost the founder and father of the library to give his exact knowledge of the subject. I will ask Dr. J. R. Chadwick now to address you.

REMARKS OF DR. J. R. CHADWICK.

Upon me devolves the not ungrateful task of setting forth the present conditions of your library, which, in the opinion of your officers, warrants the movement to secure a fitting building for the preservation of your collections and for the promotion of their usefulness.

That the true purpose and high aims of this Library Association may be fully appreciated, let me preface my facts by a few general assertions which cannot be gainsaid.

The health and longevity of life in any community is dependent in great measure upon the knowledge of its medical practitioners. The diploma of M.D. merely certifies that its possessor has laid the foundation of the knowledge essential to enable him to combat disease and death; upon the superstructure he must labor to the end of his days.

In the early years of practice few men can afford to buy or even give shelf-room to a tenth part of the books that they need; no man, whatever his means, can possibly acquire all. A library is consequently indispensable in every centre of population, or the health and

lives of the community will be jeopardized by the ignorance of its medical practitioners.

It is only through concerted action in some such association as this, owned by the profession, collected from the profession, sustained by the profession, managed for the profession, that ready access is ensured to medical literature. This Library Association was started twenty-three years ago by some among us then struggling for fame and practice, to fill the want which we keenly felt. We have labored early and late to increase our resources, until the meagre volumes that only half filled our shelves in the two rooms in Hamilton Place have increased until they not only fill our building in Boylston Place but have overflowed by thousands into the crematory at Forest Hills.

My last annual report showed that our library contained 30,310 volumes (of which 17,431 were of periodicals) and 25,965 pamphlets. They are all completely catalogued by authors, titles and subjects, so that any book or journal can be had for reference on demand. Our library ranks high among the medical libraries of the country, being only surpassed in size by that of the Surgeon-General's Office in Washington, that of the College of Physicians in Philadelphia, and that of the Academy of Medicine in New York.

Upon our shelves are preserved for all time the libraries of those from among our early associates who have laid down their earthly cares. We have the superb anatomical library collected by our incomparable first president, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, which he had conned and studied and drawn upon to illuminate his lectures at the Medical School during his thirty-five years' tenure of the professorship of anatomy, and his many addresses to our societies. Besides these may be found the libraries of the late Dr. Calvin Ellis,

Dr. Henry I. Bowditch, Dr. Edward H. Clarke, Dr. D. Humphreys Storer, Dr. George C. Shattuck — one of our constant benefactors ; those of Dr. Thomas B. Curtis and Dr. Francis H. Hooper, both cut off in the time of their growth and increasing fame ; those of Dr. Jacob Bigelow, and his son, Dr. Henry J. Bigelow, the most brilliant members of our profession in their respective epochs ; finally, the rich dermatological library of the late Dr. Edward Wigglesworth, who, for twenty-two years an active member of the Executive Committee, was the most ardent champion of our library, contributing without stint of his wisdom and material resources to bring us to the position in which we stand to-day. Lack of time obliges me to omit more names than I mentioned.

We have received from friends and relatives portraits of many early practitioners in this community, and of many of our benefactors. Chiefly to be mentioned is the fine portrait of Dr. Samuel Danforth, by Gilbert Stuart ; that of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, by Billings ; that of Drs. Henry J. Bigelow, J. B. S. Jackson, D. Humphreys Storer and Thomas B. Curtis, all by Vinton ; that of Dr. John Warren, and many others too numerous to mention. It is sad to think that most of these have had to be stored in the Art Museum that they may escape the danger from fire, to which they would be exposed if allowed to hang upon the walls of this building.

In addition to our obligations to the present and future generations of medical practitioners in this goodly city of Boston, do we not owe it to these past friends and benefactors to see that their treasures be properly cared for in a building secure against fire, and be made of use to the profession, as was the intent of their former owners ?

Another quite different field of usefulness, which

we have voluntarily occupied since 1879, was to become the medium of communication between nurses on the one hand and physicians and their patients on the other. The directory for nurses, which we have carried on for nearly nineteen years, has been of the utmost value to this community, and entitles us to a warm support from all who have availed themselves of it.

My final mission this evening is to tell you in brief of our financial situation and the main features of our projected building.

We own the building on Boylston Place, which is assessed at \$18,000; we own the lot of 9,000 square feet on the corner of St. Botolph and Garrison Streets, which is taxed for \$25,000; we owe a mortgage of \$8,500. We have a building fund of \$5,000. We propose to raise \$100,000, which is the estimated cost of a suitable building upon the Garrison Street lot. Toward this sum we can count upon obtaining at least \$9,500 (after deducting the mortgage) from the sale of our present building, which, with the addition of the building fund of \$5,000, will give us \$14,500 as a starter.

We have had preliminary sketches drawn for a building three stories in height, covering 6,750 square feet of area. In this we shall have special rooms on the ground floor for the directory for nurses, and perhaps a special reading-room for nurses. In the second story the whole front will be a reading-room with alcoves, similar to Bates Hall in the Public Library, which will be known as Holmes Hall, in memory of our first president; a special room for journals, another for those who wish to smoke, and a small hall for social meetings. In the third story there will be three or four halls for society meetings, capable of accommodating from forty to five hundred

persons each. The building will be absolutely fire-proof.

This is the scheme in outline for which we ask your active, enthusiastic co-operation.

THE PRESIDENT: I will call on Dr. J. C. Warren.

REMARKS OF DR. J. C. WARREN.

I am very glad, sir, to come here this evening and say something about the project which you have in view. I believe it is a most worthy one, and I have been surprised that we have not long ago determined to take the step that we have finally determined upon. It can only be accounted for by the financial situation of the country, which has been such an unfavorable one for so many years past.

Dr. Chadwick spoke of the advantages of a library. I don't think they can be dwelt upon too strongly, particularly in this age of rapid advancement. I suppose it has never been the case in the experience of any set of professional men that so vast, so far-reaching changes have taken place in the progress of medical science in the space of time embraced by our professional careers. Any one at all engaged in literary pursuits must realize how many standard works have been born, lived and died within that period, have already been placed upon the upper shelves of the libraries and new ones have taken their place. Systems of medicine and of surgery have been written and have become antiquated within even the period of a decade. One needs, therefore, considerable resources to keep him abreast of the time if he wishes to be able to read at his convenience and leisure all the latest contributions to medical and surgical science, and even a man who is able to purchase all that he desires to read will find it a difficult problem to have it so arranged in his own home that it is

always at hand when he wishes to read any particular volume. In my own experience, having a library of several thousand volumes, I have found it more convenient to come across the Common and ask Dr. Brigham for a book than to hunt around hopelessly for it on my shelves, although pretty sure I possess it, and during a good deal of hard literary work in the last ten years I have found the medical library an invaluable resource. I do not know how I could possibly have got along without it.

Dr. Chadwick has alluded to the educational value of ready access to medical literature to members of the profession. There are a great many men who cannot afford to have large libraries. The majority cannot. There are many that can only afford to keep the books they have been obliged to buy during the period of acquiring their medical education, and yet it is necessary for them as well as for the teachers of medicine to keep abreast of the times if they will do justice by their patients. I think, therefore, we cannot dwell too strongly upon the educational value of such an institution as this on the mass of the profession, and I think that ought practically to be the keynote by which we shall approach the public—that we do the work which follows that of the medical school. The medical school teaches the physician the rudiments of medicine; the medical library gives him the opportunity to be always a student and to keep upon a far higher level of medical knowledge than he otherwise would be able to do. And I think also we can use as a forcible argument the advantages which accrue from the work done for the nurses of the city. That is a public benefit, something which the citizens of Boston profit by themselves.

I will only say this in conclusion, that my set, if you wish to call it that, when we were young, took hold

and did a good deal of hard work. Dr. Chadwick has not told you half what he has done for this library. There were a great many men, contemporaries of his, who have done a great deal of public-spirited work. I am glad to have this opportunity to say to the coming generation of young men, that there is a lot of public-spirited work they could do; if they would come forward and each do his share, the stones of the new building would pile up upon one another in no time at all.

THE PRESIDENT: We all know how much the Medical School, the Warren Museum and other institutions of learning have owed to the gracious efforts of Dr. Warren for the profession, and we hope that he will feel he can lend us a hand in this higher method of education to which he has so gracefully alluded; but I feel, with him, that we ought to have help from the younger generation, and I am going to call upon a gentleman who has been among the most active in advocating this subject, Dr. A. K. Stone.

REMARKS OF DR. A. K. STONE.

I don't know that there is very much to be added to what already has been so well said. I belong to a set of men who, I think, have used the library a great deal, and found out its value. The library is of much value to the young man, the man who finds it hard work to buy a five or ten dollar book and keep it a short time only to find it is out of date, yet has got to keep up with the literature of the time, study things coming up from time to time, to see how many of them are useless and how many useful, and to do this he has got to have the resources that are presented to him in the accumulated pile he gets at the library. The man who does not get hold of the library and sticks to the text-books that he takes with

him from the medical school, and has besides one journal, perhaps, that he subscribes to, reminds me of the cook on the Back Bay, who, when urged to take some of the books in the house and read them, said she had no need of any more literature; she read the "Lives of the Saints" and *Town Topics*, and that was amply sufficient for her purpose. I think we want all of us to take hold and do what little we can to help this thing forward, and not be relying on the few books we are able to buy ourselves.

THE PRESIDENT: I will now ask one of our oldest members to present some resolutions with remarks: Dr. F. I. Knight.

REMARKS OF DR. F. I. KNIGHT.

It is unnecessary for me to say anything in introducing these resolutions in addition to what has been said, except, just in passing, to emphasize the fact which I have encountered in the last few days in trying to get money, that most people in the community haven't the slightest idea of what the library is, or what it is for, and it will take more than one interview to present the subject so that they really will comprehend that side of the question which Dr. Warren has presented tonight,—the great importance to the community indirectly, in fact almost directly, in the maintenance of a library of this kind. One person with whom I was speaking said, "What is this? Is it a place where the doctors go to smoke and read the papers?" He seemed to think it was a kind of club-room and place for recreation, and the doctors might as well pay for it all themselves. We found before that most of the money raised was given to us because we asked for it. It was a personal thing: "I know you, and you want this thing, and I will give you the money." I think most of the former contribu-

tors had very little idea of the importance of the library. Rich men must be made to appreciate the fact that the library is of very great importance to the profession and almost directly to the community, therefore I would present these resolutions :

Resolved, That a General Committee of not less than twenty five (25), with the President as Chairman, and the other officers of the Association as members *ex officio*, with power to add to their number, be appointed by the Chair to take charge of the raising of funds and the erection of a new building.

Resolved, That from this General Committee an Executive Committee of five (5) be appointed by the Chairman, to have the entire management of the details of the whole subject, and report regularly to the General Committee.

Resolved, That a Special Committee of three (3) be appointed to consider and report upon the question of a site for the new building.

THE PRESIDENT: I call upon Dr. George B. Shattuck, who is the editor of our medical journal, and familiar with all periodical literature.

REMARKS OF DR. G. B. SHATTUCK.

I fear I shall have to ask the indulgence of the company. I think it is one of the disadvantages of youth (and I believe I may classify myself as one of those young men to whom the President referred, who were to be called upon to speak later), that youth has to glean where age has harvested, and I do not know exactly what I can say to you that has not been already said. Moreover, I feel the disadvantage of exhorting too vigorously in this matter, for I remember the precept that the exhorter should not prove to be a castaway (laughter), and it seems to me that the subsequent action might be expected to be in proportion to the vigor of the exhortation (laughter). I think that in everything that has

been said to you, gentlemen, to-night there has been no exaggeration of statement or of appeal. I believe unquestionably that the profession should try to do all it can itself in this matter, and I have no doubt that if we set a good example ourselves we shall be able to preach to the laity with a more fruitful result. Then as to the means of doing that, it seems to me there is no stronger argument of our needs than to come here to the library itself. It speaks for itself. If any one asked, Where are your needs and what are your necessities? — if we could get him down here we should simply reply: Circumspice (Look about you). And it would be enough. Although classifying myself among the younger men here, I can still recall the beginnings of the library in Hamilton Place. I can look back and see stage by stage what has been accomplished since that day. I can recall the great need and want of just such an undertaking as was then started, and, seeing what has been accomplished, I am impressed with the feeling to-day that the outlook for our doing still a great deal more than has been done is certainly more hopeful than it was at that time for accomplishing what we have accomplished up to the present moment. I have no doubt if the men who are to-day of about the same age and period that those men were who took up this matter at that time will take it up with the same interest and vigor they did then that we shall be able to push our aims forward to a most satisfactory conclusion.

There is one point which has come home to me as a trustee of the Boston Athenæum and a member of the Library Committee there, and that was the transfer of all the medical books of the Boston Athenæum to this library. It is a fact that in 1826, I think, perhaps seventy odd years ago, the books of The

Second Social or Boston Medical Library, which was started in 1805, were transferred, after a somewhat languishing period of existence of that body, to the Athenæum, and formed the nucleus of what subsequently became the medical department of the Athenæum. Now the Athenæum has gone on since that time purchasing a certain quantity of medical books up to within a few years, and Dr. Cheever referred to the fact that he used to go to the Athenæum — that was one of the sources of medical books at one time for him. Now it is only within a year or two that the Athenæum has transferred all its medical books to this medical library, recognizing that this was the depot and centre of medical literature for this State, for this neighborhood, and they have given up buying any more medical books. In the same way they are carrying out the same method with reference to books on law. They consider that the library of the Bar Association should be the depository for a special class of books of that kind. Now that shows what the general feeling in the community is getting to be. There are to be special literary centres, and we are being recognized as the custodians and guardians of medical learning. I think we can present ourselves now to the community in that way; that is already becoming recognized. We have duties; we have responsibilities in that direction, and it is right and proper that we should be aided and helped by the community in discharging those duties and responsibilities now that the public itself puts such duties and responsibilities upon us. We can go to men and state our position from that point of view and I think it will be listened to.

Dr. Holmes in that delightful address which he delivered when we inaugurated this building, some seventeen years ago, told us that it was our duty to

offer the widest and largest hospitality to medical literature of all kinds, and we certainly have endeavored to live up to that injunction; but the result of our trying to live up to that injunction is that we have outgrown these premises by our accumulations, even in these seventeen years, and at that time apparently we considered that we were pretty well fixed for a long time to come. He also, I remember, spoke of its being one of our duties by our collection of books on medical learning to illuminate all the dark places, and in that way to antagonize those pseudological fancies which had, and I regret to say still have, a tendency to flourish in this community. We may do our best to illuminate all the dark places, but as fast as we unhorse one pseudological fancy another leaps into the saddle and rides more recklessly, so that if we are going to carry out that injunction we shall certainly require all the accommodation for learning and literature that we can possibly attain unto. I think Dr. Warren's suggestion to you—that this library should be regarded as a post-graduate medical school—was also a very good one, and I think that is another argument with which we can go to the people outside of the profession, and which ought to prove effective.

In closing I would merely give expression to one thought which perhaps is sometimes overlooked, that is, that we may regard this library as a sort of medical literary storage-warehouse. It does relieve all of us of a great burden in that respect. I don't know but that point comes home to me perhaps a little more strongly than to most of you, but my main object is to get rid of books and periodicals rather than to acquire them, and it is quite as much a question with me of the advantage of being able to put books and periodicals into the library as of the advantage of being able

to take them out. That is rather a homely consideration but a practical one, and one we ought to take home to ourselves in considering the many things that the library does for us.

THE PRESIDENT: I am sure that we have received some new ideas. I hope they will germinate. We do not, however, wish to confine ourselves only to native talent, but we want to think of other places. There are other cities than Boston in America. Some of them have fine libraries, and in some of them the medical profession is in a very flourishing condition. We are fortunate, I think, in having with us now a gentleman who has seen a good deal of other places, and who can tell us what he thinks had better be done to help us on here in Boston. I would ask Dr. Councilman if he would say a few words.

REMARKS OF DR. W. T. COUNCILMAN.

I feel in Boston not as one coming from a strange city, Mr. President, but already as one of the oldest inhabitants. With regard to the medical library, I can only speak of the enormous service the library has been to me and to the men working in the laboratories here. The special value of the library is in its sets of journals and monographs; those are absolutely necessary for any one doing scientific work, and very necessary frequently to have them almost immediately at hand, and we have found this library really invaluable to us. I am very much in sympathy with the idea of a new home for the profession, because I understand that the new building which it is proposed to erect will not only be a library but serve as a medical centre of the profession in the city, will be more or less of a medical home where the various societies can meet and where the men can go, and I feel sure also that the medical profession will do a great deal towards raising the

amount of money necessary for the building. I don't think that they should be called upon to raise all, but certainly the medical profession themselves should contribute very largely to that building, because the success of the men in the profession is very largely due to this library, and I believe that the profession will recognize that.

THE PRESIDENT: We must have in this movement the co-operation of what Dr. Henry J. Bigelow used to call the "active young men," and I would ask you to listen for a moment to a statement of one of the younger members in regard to the value of this library and what the younger members can do for it. I will ask Dr. Frederic J. Cotton to speak.

REMARKS OF DR. FREDERIC J. COTTON.

I can only give my testimony as to the actual working efficiency of the library. This has impressed itself on me, especially in comparing the conditions here with those in Vienna. While there, in the preparation of a paper, I had to look up with some care the literature of a special subject. First, I went to the hospital library, a subscription reading-room, much used, which contains the current numbers and files of the standard periodicals. The French literature is, however, poorly represented, the Italian hardly at all, and the English and American by one periodical, the *British Medical Journal*, I think. Consequently, there were many references I did not get.

After that I went to the University, and found the books there rather difficult of access, and the cataloguing rather unhandy for the stranger. I finally got, after two or three visits, only two or three volumes I wanted.

The best library in Vienna is that of the Gesellschaft der Aerzte, but that is not open to the general public.

I therefore submitted my list through a friend who is a member of the society, but got nothing I had not previously seen. The Hof-Bibliothek I did not try, as this same friend told me I should find few or no periodicals there.

In the end, I had to publish with a comparatively faulty knowledge of the work previously done on the subject, and my bibliography was confessedly incomplete. I do not know that I could have gotten all my references at the medical library here, but I do know that I should not have had to spend a week or more hunting for them, and if they were not here I could have gotten them from Washington through the medical library at little expense of time or money.

Among the men whose work here I know, I recall but one case where a man has not in some way gotten what he wanted by asking Dr. Brigham. That is a case where he could not get a volume from Washington — it was too large to send.

This comparison of our facilities with those of such a medical centre as Vienna is certainly gratifying, and it seems to me we should not forget, in using the library, to take a certain pride in its efficiency.

DR. WARREN: Dr. Chadwick alluded to the other libraries, instanceing the one at Washington, the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Philadelphia, and the Academy of Medicine in New York. I think any one who has visited those institutions will see at once the immense advantage of having a medical centre in a large city. The College of Physicians and Surgeons is a very old and highly respected institution and the rallying point of the profession in Philadelphia and perhaps of the whole State of Pennsylvania. The Academy in New York is a most luxurious place, where all kinds of society meetings can be held, gath-

erings of medical men of whatever nature, and has every comfort and convenience, and it seems to me that not only from the educational point of view but, to a certain extent, from a business and perhaps also a social point of view they are of incalculable advantage. I can see how a house like that would be a gathering point where the physicians of the city and those of the suburbs, who are so numerous as Dr. Cheever has pointed out, could meet. Men coming from distant parts of the State would come here and make their purchases, have their purchases perhaps sent to this place, stop and read the latest literature and see many of the men. I can see how the library could conduct a series of educational lectures open to the profession at large—medical smoke talks. The field enlarges very greatly when one begins to see what the possibilities of such a building are.

DR. CHADWICK: I think perhaps it ought to be explained what this Committee on Site means. We have a site on the corner of Garrison and Botolph Streets which we have held nearly ten years. When we bought it we believed, and most of us still believe, it is a very good site, probably as good a site as this Association can afford. There are, however, quite a number of men who have thought the site was not worthy of the Association, and that it would not be convenient, so we have thought it better at the outset not to have it supposed that we were wedded to that site. There are changes taking place. It is possible that a better site may be obtained which will be within our means. We therefore wish it understood that while we have had sketches made for the building on the lot on Garrison Street, we are not wedded to it, and wish the committee to go over the ground and see if a better site can be secured. That is the reason for the appointment of that committee.

THE PRESIDENT: Are you ready for the question? Those in favor of the passage of these resolutions will please raise their hands. Contrary minded. It is a unanimous vote. In accord with the resolutions the President is called upon to announce the committee, which consists first of the officers of the Society, the Executive Committee, and the following gentlemen: Drs. J. C. Warren, J. C. White, H. P. Bowditch, Clarence J. Blake, F. C. Shattuck, A. T. Cabot, G. W. Gay, Harold Williams, H. L. Burrell, A. K. Stone, W. N. Bullard, M. Storer, J. A. Tanner, E. H. Stevens, H. F. Hewes, making with the Executive Committee and the officers of the Society twenty-five. The appointment of the gentlemen who are to serve as an executive committee of five can very well come later; but it is important that the President should announce the committee of three on the site, so that they may be busily at work looking about to see if they can find any better location, as Dr. Chadwick says, *within our means*. The Committee on the Site will consist of Drs. J. B. Ayer, Arthur H. Nichols and W. L. Burrage.

